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THE OBSERVATOR.

The Neceſſity of taking Care of our Weſt India *Trade farther prov'd, by Addreſſes from the Lords and Commons againſt the* Scotch *Colony in King* William's *Time. Propoſals by the* Spaniards *to King* Charles *the* II. *of advancing our Trade neglected by him and his Penſioner-Parliament. Members of Parliament to follow the Direction of their Electors. On the taking of the Town of* Lerida, *and the King of* Pruſſia's *ſucceeding to* Neufchattel.

From Saturday, November 1. to Wednesday, November 5. 1707.

Country-m. THere's no Body talks ſo much of the Importance of our *Weſt India* Trade as you, Maſter; or of the Danger it may be in, by the Settlement of the *French* there. Have you any good Authority for it?

Obſ. Yes, *Roger*, I have. Our Lords and Commons were ſo ſenſible of the Importance of the *Weſt India* Trade to *England*, and of the Danger of that Trade, by the Colony from *Scotland*, that they preſented an Addreſs to King *William* againſt it, on the 13th of *December* 1695. wherein they expreſs themſelves to this Effect, "That the Act for "the *Scotch African* and *Indian* Company, would "bring many Prejudices and Miſchiefs to all his "Majeſty's Subjects concern'd in the Wealth or "Trade of *England* ---, becauſe this Nation would "loſe the Benefit of ſupplying foreign Parts with "thoſe Commodities which hath always been a "great Article in the Ballance of our foreign Trade "------; and if the *Scots* ſettle Plantations in *A-*"*merica*, our Commerce in Tobacco, Sugar, Cot-"ton, Wool, Skins, Maſts, *&c.* will be utterly "loſt ---, and the Exportation of our own Manu-"factures muſt yearly decreaſe.

Country-m. That's good Authority indeed, Maſter: The Lords and Commons ſpoke like true *Engliſh* Patriots.

Obſ. That they did, *Roger*; and their Reaſons are of perpetual Force, but much ſtronger againſt the *French* and the *Spaniards* of their Faction; then they were againſt the *Scots*, becauſe the latter had not Strength enough to go thro' with the Deſign; whereas we find, by woful Experience, that the former have but too much; and therefore are capable of doing us a great deal of more Damage. For if the *French* and the *Spaniards* of their Faction, come once to agree in the Improvement of that *Iſthmus*, for ſhortening the Way of Trade to and from the *Eaſt-Indies*; to land the Product of thoſe Countries on the *South*, and thoſe of *Europe*, on the *North* of *America*, our Trade both to the *Eaſt* and *Weſt Indies* muſt neceſſarily fall.

Country-m. And that will be a plaguy Fall for *England*, Maſter. But pray go on; was there not a ſecond Addreſs?

Obſ. Yes, *Roger*, the ſecond Addreſs was by our Lords only, and preſented the 12th of *February* 1700. when they expreſs'd themſelves to this Purpoſe, "That being, according to our Duty, ſollicitous for "the Preſervation and Encreaſe of the Trade of this "Kingdom, on which the Support of your Maje-"ſty's Greatneſs and Honour ſo much depends, as "well as the Security and Defence of your People; "we have been very apprehenſive, that the Steps "lately made towards a Settlement of your Subjects "of the Kingdom of *Scotland*, at *Darien*, may tend "to the great Prejudice of this Nation ---. We "humbly preſume, to put your Majeſty in Mind "of the Addreſs of both Houſes of Parliament, on "the 13th of *December* 1695. in the Cloſe of which, "your Majeſty will ſee the unanimous Senſe of this "Kingdom, in Relation to any Settlement the *Scots* "might make in the *Weſt Indies*-----. And in the Cloſe of this Addreſs, they acquaint his Majeſty, "That on the 8th, this Houſe came to this farther "Reſolution, That the Settlement of the *Scots* Co-"lony at *Darien*, is inconſiſtent with the Plantati-"on-Trade of this Kingdom.

Country-m. Noble and vigorous Addreſſes indeed, Maſter: They fully convince me of the great Importance of having our *Weſt India* Trade ſecur'd againſt our preſent Rivals, who are twenty to one more dangerous, than ever the *Scots* were. But have there been any ſuch Addreſſes upon that Subject ſince, Maſter?

Obſ. Did you ever ſee or hear of any, *Roger*?

Country-m. No, not I, Maſter.

Obſ. Then why do'ſt ask me ſuch an impertinent Queſtion?

Country-m. Ben't angry, Maſter; I am afraid I muſt ask one or two more ſuch. And the firſt is, was there not an Act in King *William*'s Time, for Limitations upon the Succeſſor? And were there not Clauſes in that Act, That after the Death of the Queen, without Heirs of her Body, *All Privy-Counſellors ſhould ſign their Advice; and that thoſe who had Places of Profit, or Penſions from the Crown, ſhould be uncapable of ſitting in the Houſe of Commons?*

Obſ. Why do'ſt thou ask what every Body knows, *Roger*?

Country-m. Pray have Patience, Maſter; a few Queſtions more. Have not ſome of the Clauſes of that Act, been repeal'd ſince? And are not Officers of the Army and Navy ſtill capable of being Parliament-men?

Obſ. All the World knows it, *Roger*; but prithee tell me, why thou teazeſt me to Day, with ſuch impertinent Queſtions.

Country-m. Tar-box for that, Maſter; perhaps you'll tell ſomebody elſe, and then *Roger* may have the Fate of his old Maſter. But pray, Sir, had we ever any Notice of the *French*'s engroſſing the *Weſt India* Trade, or endangering our Colonies there?

Obſ. Yes, *Roger*; the late Earl of *Bellomont*, in ſeveral of his Speeches to the Repreſentatives of our *Northern* Plantations in King *William*'s Reign, took Notice of the Danger they were in from the *French* Colonies, and from the Practices of the *French* with the neighbouring *Indians*; and the Council General of the *Scotch African* Company, acquainted King *William* by their Letter of *December* 1699. that they had poſitive Information, that the *French* had a Deſign upon all that Coaſt.

Country-m. Then I find we cannot pretend Ignorance, Maſter; and that the Earl of *Bellomont*, and thoſe *Scotch* Gentlemen, have prov'd true Prophets. Pray inform me and my Neighbours a little more, Maſter, of the Importance of our *Weſt India* Trade, that we may tell our Parliament-men to take Care on't. If they don't, I doubt not, but in a little Time, they will have Occaſion to court our Votes againſt another Election; and I will as ſoon ſwallow my Oaken Towel, as poll for thoſe that don't take Care of our Trade.

Obſ. There is more to be ſaid on that Head, *Roger*, than our preſent Time and Room will allow; but I'll tell you one Thing, which may ſatisfy you in a good Meaſure. The *Spaniards*, who are no Fools,

Fools, knew our Trade with their *West Indies*, &c. to be of such Value to us, that they thought it a sufficient Argument to perswade King *Charles* the II. to come into the Alliance at that Time against *France*, when they propos'd to discharge all *French* Commodities, and to take every Thing they wanted from us; they also knew King *Charles* to be a capable Judge; and therefore would not have offer'd this, had it not carry'd Demonstration along with it.

Country-m. That's a considerable Proof indeed, Master; but did not the King accept it? Nor his Parliament address him to fall in with it?

Obs. No, no, *Roger*, it was the Pensioner-Parliament sat then; and they acted wholly by the Direction of the Court, which was altogether in the *French* Interest.

Country-m. Oh, Pensioner-Parliaments, pack'd Parliaments, brib'd Parliaments!

Obs. What's the Matter, *Roger?* Art thou going mad?

Country-m. Mad, Master! 'Tis enough to make any Man mad, to think, That an *English* Parliament should ever have neglected such an Opportunity of making their Country happy. You may call me mad, Master; but I am not such a Fool, as not to perceive, that had *England* join'd with *Spain* in those Days, when the *French* King was not arriv'd to the full Height of his Tyranny and Power; we might then have prevented all that Blood, Devastation, and Persecution, which has since befallen *Europe* by the *French* King's insatiable Ambition. How many Millions of Money, and thousands of Lives, would that have sav'd us? I think, Master, I might very well be allow'd to call it a curs'd Parliament, which neglected such an Opportunity.

Obs. 'Tis not the first Time, *Roger*, that *English* Parliaments, which did not act for the Interest of their Country, have been stigmatiz'd, and transmitted to Posterity, with very odious Characters. But I would have you be modest.

Country-m. I cannot, with Patience, hear of a Pensioner-Parliament, or a pack'd Parliament, Master, when I consider what Pains I and every true *English* Freeholder take; what Expence the Nation is at, to send up honest Men to represent us in Parliament; and how much the Nation has suffer'd by brib'd Parliaments. For any of those men to be brib'd, pension'd, or plac'd out of the Interest of their Country, for which we chuse them, is to act the Part of a Fiend, and not of a Man.

Obs. Why so furious, *Roger?*

Country-m. You must allow me now and then, Master, to call a Spade a Spade. Pray give me your Opinion freely, if our Representatives in Parliament, are not to follow the Directions of their Electors?

Obs. Roger, my Lord *Coke*, second *Instit.* fol. 8, 9, 10, 14. says, "That formerly the Business which "requir'd the meeting of Parliaments, was pub-"lish'd in the Writs, that the Commons and Free-"men might consider what they thought conveni-"ent to have done; and that they might chuse pro-"per Delegates, and *direct them as they think fit.* "That the Cause of the Parliament was declar'd in "St. *Edward*'s Chamber, that the Persons elected, "might be able to give their respective Countries "timely Information of it, in order to *receive their* "*Directions* therein ----. And that when any new "Device is propos'd on the Behalf of the Crown, "the Commons may answer, *That in this new De-*"*vice, they dare not agree, without Conference with their* "*Countries.*

Country-m. I heartily thank you, Master. God grant there be none in St. *Stephen*'s Chappel, of contrary Principles and Practices too; but if there be, Master, I am not afraid to say, that my Lord *Coke* will allow me to call them by very hard Names. Here's her Majesty's, and all honest Parliament-mens Healths, in one Bumper.

Obs. I'll pledge you, *Roger*; and then good Night.

Country-m. Here's the *Dutch* Mails come in, Master, and bring the bad News, that the Town of *Lerida*, in *Spain*, is taken and plunder'd; that the Garrison is besieg'd in the Castle, and that the Allies have lost some Hundreds of Men at *Pegos*, in that Country.

Obs. I am sorry for it, *Roger*. All this calls louder and louder upon those whose Province it is, to enquire into the Causes of so many Losses on that Side, in order to retrieve them; and at the same time, to consider whether sending a strong Squadron to the *West Indies*, be not the most probable Method to reduce the *French* King speedily to Reason, and to recover the *Spanish* Monarchy out of his Hands; without which, we have fought all this While for nothing.

Country-m. I am of your Opinion, Master; but there are those who contradict us: Therefore pray let me have some good Authority, to stop their Mouths with.

Obs. We have the Authority of the Queen and Parliament for it, *Roger*. Her Majesty, in her Speech to both Houses, on the 7th of *October* 1705. said, *That nothing can be more evident, than that if the* French *King continues Master of the* Spanish *Monarchy, the Ballance of Power in* Europe *is utterly destroy'd; and he will be able in a short Time, to engross the Trade and Wealth of the World.*

Country-m. This confirms what you and I have been talking, Master; and so he will very speedily, if he be suffer'd to trade thus, without Interruption, on both Sides of *America*. I hope this will make our Arguments for the Importance of the *Darien Isthmus*, or of taking *Carthagena* and *Panama* to be consider'd, Master.

Obs. I hope so too, *Roger*: And I tell you farther, that the Lords and Commons did both concur with her Majesty's Opinion, as appears by their Addresses at that Time.

Country-m. Then, Master, there's no Doubt of their Concurrence with her Majesty, to enquire into the Causes of our miscarrying hitherto, in that so noble and necessary Design; and to concert Measures for effecting it, with all possible Speed. And I hope, Master, we shall be at more Liberty to attempt it by Sea, than formerly.

Obs. Why, *Roger?*

Country-m. Because the King of *Prussia* is declar'd Prince of *Neufchattel*, and the Allies are oblig'd by Treaty to keep him in Possession. This will also engage the Protestant Cantons at least, on his Side; so that with the Elector of *Hannover*'s Army; that commanded by the Duke of *Savoy* and Prince *Eugene* to enter *Dauphine*; and the new Efforts we are to expect from the King of *Prussia* and the *Switzers*; we have good Ground to hope, the *French* King will have his Hands so full at Land, by the other Confederates, that we may have more Room to make Use of our Naval Force, which is the most natural Weapon for Islanders against foreign Enemies.

Obs. That must be as our Superiors think best, *Roger.*

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